

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, May 16, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Paris Hotel Vendome. May 16, 1895. My darling Alec:

It was simply dear in you to write me such a nice long letter and so soon. I wasn't expecting it at all and could hardly believe my good fortune when Daisy handed me the bulky envelope and I saw your black crabbed characters. I was so glad I don't know but what, well I did hold the packet very near my face a minute. Don't feel obliged to write such a long epistle every time, for I know the writing takes time and that means late hours, but just a few lines that I may feel and see as well as know that I am remembered.

I shall be curious to learn the result of Mr. Pinkerton's exertions. And I want to know why you staid over in Washington. I presume it had to do with census matters. I want to know about everything, but I don't dare to think much of you or I shall be homesick. I feel as if I were living over a closed well, the cover being not very strong. While it holds I can dance and be very well content, but let the cover break and down I shall go into unknown depths of homesickness. I didn't weep a little weep because I wanted to write you all by pilot and I had no time to indulge my feeling and didn't want to. It's expensive and I am trying to be economical. So far I have simply failed, miserably and disgracefully and I am down. I have lain awake nights, I who am such a good sleeper, going over my accounts over and over trying to see just how much I may spend. I have come to the conclusion that another week of this hotel will simply ruin me and I am frantic to leave, but 2 until today it just seemed as if I simply couldn't find a hole or corner of Paris where there weren't English or American people. I got so tired and discouraged. Today however things look brighter. Miss Duncan has come to my rescue and Miss Robertson has found another address that sounds promising. I incline to think that the Convent is the best place for the

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children. The building is said to be beautiful and the garden covers three blocks and the very best French is spoken there, and with girls of their own age the children would talk far more than with older people. Then I can have a French lady to go out walking with them and show them the sights. I feel that I did not realize in Washington how little the children knew of Paris and French History and that therefore they ought to stay here until they have learned something of both. A few minutes ago Daisy asked if Napoleon III came before or after the Revolution! She thought it was before! She is willing to learn. She seems more willing to learn than Elsie. Elsie wants to be told, she doesn't want the bother of finding out things for herself. I must confess that so far as current coin of information goes this method of acquiring knowledge seems to answer with her. She remembers everything that is told her so well. But surely this is not the right way to study? Daisy says she must read to remember and she reads Baedeker. Elsie gets all her information from the guides and me and will not open a book or newspaper if she can help herself. Yet to hear her talk you would think her deeply versed in all these subjects and that she had thought over them.

Both children are very good and thoughtful of me. I had rather an explosion the other day. I felt so discouraged because Elsie had soiled her cleaned dress again within three days and it did seem as if I might go on getting her things and she would never keep them. She was very good and gentle and has been very careful since and I think feels that it really worries me more than she did before. I like being with my children after these years of absence and I do not feel that the absence has separated them from me. I am sure Elias and Robert to the contrary notwithstanding that I am as much to my daughters as ever I was. They are both very happy and talking French as much as they can. I have told Daisy to ask Ethel McKeen to let you see her letter to her. I think it is very good. I took them to the theatre as a means of increasing their knowledge of French and they seemed to understand all that was said to an extent that astonished me, to follow all the "bon mots" and hits as well as any Frenchwoman present. I took them to that particular piece because I had read a resume of it and knew though it was decidedly sensational the morale were unexceptional, and I didn't know of how many plays I could feel sure would pass muster in

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that respect. It is late now and I must take the children to lunch. We go to a restaurant that Mr. McCurdy may remember, on the Avenue de l'Opera, as we can get as good a lunch there for two francs each as we pay six francs each for here. The place is a good one too. It is almost as cold as it must be at Baddeck these last two days, but before that it was 80° and shirt waists and muslins were worn.

Good-bye. I love you. Please remember me to all Sunday. I think of everyone with great affection.

Lovingly yours ever.